

NUBIAN MOSES, ETHIOPIAN EXODUS, ARABIAN SOLOMON

RECONSTRUCTING THE OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

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SUMMARY

The Hebrew/Old Testament contains a highly detailed account of the history of the Jews that begins with the arrival of their ancestral Hebrew in the Holy Land under the Patriarch Abraham. After centuries of slave labour in Egypt the Hebrew were freed by the Prophet Moses, who united them under divine law (Torah) and led them in an epic journey to the Promised Land of Canaan, which was eventually subdued by Joshua most probably around 1200 BC. Two “Israelite” kingdoms emerged that enjoyed a zenith of about seventy five years under King David and King Solomon (ca.1000-925 BC). The northern kingdom (Israel) was destroyed by the Assyrians ca.722/721 BC and the southern kingdom (Judah) by the Babylonians ca. 586 BC. According to the Old Testament, the Jews (from the kingdom of Judah) returned to Jerusalem after they had assisted the Persians overthrow the Babylonians in the fifth century BC. It was in this period that the Old Testament was compiled, under the leadership of Ezra the priest-scribe [Coogan; Nicholson; Van der Toorn]

Systematic scientific archaeology commenced in the British controlled Holy Land (Palestine) in the 1920's, specifically to confirm the Old Testament record [Albright]. This coincided with migration of persecuted Jews from Europe and elsewhere that culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, whose *raison d'être* was partly that the Holy Land was the divinely ordained Jewish Promised Land but mostly because the preceding centuries had proved that it was largely impossible for Jews to find security and equitable treatment elsewhere.¹ However, while it could be justifiably argued that after two thousand years of persecution Jews could only find security in a land of their own², archaeologists were unable to find any evidence in the Holy Land to confirm the Old Testament was a true story [Thompson 1992]. One prominent archaeologist, Professor Thomas L. Thompson, has moved to the edge of an extreme position of *Judaism Denial*, implying that not only is the Old Testament complete fiction but Judaism is a bogus religion invented by a marginalised elite in Palestine ca. 450 BC to gain control of Jerusalem and the surrounding area [Thompson

¹ Israel does not have a written constitution. Israeli claims to the country rest on four main issues (i) the belief the area was the Promised Land divinely granted to Abraham and Moses (ii) long established settlement (iii) the Balfour Declaration and UN recognition (iv) victory in war
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/The_Jewish_Claim_To_The_Land_Of_Israel.html

² *Deuteronomy 30:1-5* stated that the Hebrew were destined to be exiled as a consequence of sin but would eventually return to the Promised Land. However, this appears to a fabrication written in Ezra's era since it does not appear in the older, Sheba-Menelik, Torah. The notion of the *Ingathering of the Exiles* (קִיבוּץ גִּלּוּיִים) inspired the Zionist Movement [Gorny, Yosef [2006] *Converging Alternatives: The Bund and the Zionist Labor Movement, 1897-1985* State University of New York, page 251]

1999]. This paper argues that the Old Testament is a very accurate historical account but (i) Hilkiah, the Zadokite high priest to King Josiah of Judah [ca.640-609 BC], radically transformed the Israelite religion by falsely claiming to have “discovered” the Book of Deuteronomy (using an ancient text but adding his own self-serving agenda), and (ii) Nehemiah and Ezra (Hilkiah’s great grandson) added even more to Deuteronomy; then, in order to consolidate their political and theological position, falsely claimed that Palestine was the Promised Land. In mitigation, sources state that the Samaritans, exiled by the Assyrians from the northern Kingdom of Israel to Palestine, had already built a temple at Mount Gerizim [Hjelm: 16]. Nehemiah and Ezra’s group may have countered the prestige of that temple by claiming to rebuild the old one in what they claimed was Jerusalem. Several alternative hypotheses are discussed but the main focus of this work is to argue that Moses was a Hebrew born in *Nubia* and led the enslaved Hebrew south-eastwards through Ethiopia/Eritrea to cross the Red Sea into Yemen, where they regrouped before striking north to conquer a Canaan located in West Arabia not Palestine.

Attention is also focused on Ethiopian Old Testament traditions which have largely been dismissed and often ridiculed in Western academia. This work concludes that these traditions appear to be an accurate account of Hebrew/Israelite history from the time of Moses until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Jews, Christians and Muslims acknowledge Patriarch Abraham as the founder of their faiths. Muslims consider that Islam is a return to Abraham’s religion, from which Jews and Christians had deviated [Glassé 2008: 2]. Abraham recognised the One True God; and Abrahamic monotheism spread to such an extent that by the twentieth century it dominated world culture outside Hindu India and the Buddhist Far East.

Monotheism was boosted, ca. 1200 BC onwards, by the rise of Iron Age states with centralised literate bureaucracies and a policy of conformity. In the violent chaotic upheavals that followed in Europe and the Middle East as peoples migrated and opened up new agricultural areas and trade routes, laws were developed to order on the rapidly changing societies [Jaspers 2011]. Some Iron Age states found that monotheism assisted central control and found the threat of divine wrath was a powerful incentive to comply with “divine” laws such as the Old Testament *Holiness Code* of Leviticus 17-26. [<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2015/february-15/faith-or-fear.html>]

Judaism has important differences to Christianity and Islam. Historically, it had a brief political zenith of a mere seventy five years under King David and King Solomon. Except forcibly during the Hasmonean dynasty, it did not encourage conversion [Gilbert:13; Josephus *Antiquities* xiii. 9, § 1; xiv. 4, § 4]. From AD 329 the Romans executed anyone converting [Lieu, North & Rajak]. The state of Khazar that briefly became Jewish for opportunist reasons quickly faded [Gilbert: 24]. Therefore, unlike Christianity and Islam, it did not seek or form empires after the Roman occupation. In addition, national identity and religion were synonymous and Jews believed that they were a special people, the *Chosen People*, with a divine mission, which many interpreted to serve as a *light to the nations* [Old Testament Book of Isaiah 49:6], an example for the world to follow.

Jewish and Arab traditions speak of a division of the Hebrew between the sons of Abraham. Isaac, son of Abraham’s wife Leah, was the ancestor of the Israelites, who took their name

from his son Israel (better known as Jacob), father of the Twelve Tribes. Ishmael, son of Abraham's wife Hagar, was the ancestor of the Arabs. From Jacob until Moses, the Israelites (Hebrew) lived in Egypt, while the Ishmaelites (Hebrew who became Arabs) lived in Arabia [Newby:115].

The Jews' relationship with God, their sacred law (Torah) and their history is recorded in the Hebrew Testament known to the Christians as the Old Testament. The earliest manuscript would have been the Torah probably for inclusion in the First Temple during the reign of King Solomon. The definitive edition, written with vowels, was finally accomplished ca. AD 950 about six hundred years *after* the Christian New Testament (sic) [Alt, Albrecht et al:1967].

The Old Testament explains how God created the world. Its historical account begins with the journey of Patriarch Abraham the Hebrew to settle in a new land, and the division of his people into the Hebrew in Egypt and Arabia. Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph, served with distinction at the Egyptian court. For unstated reasons, the Egyptians later enslaved the Hebrew for about 430 years but they were led to freedom by a charismatic leader named Moses (ca.1300-1200 BC), who united them under divine law. Joshua, Moses' successor, eventually conquered the Promised Land of Canaan, granted by God to the Hebrew. The Hebrew/Israelites absorbed Canaanites, creating two Israelite kingdoms. Israel was in the north and contained ten tribes. Judah, in the south, had two. Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722/721 BC, and Judah by Babylon in 586 BC. Much of their hierarchy was deported to other parts of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. The religion of Israel was Samaritan while the Judeans developed theirs into Judaism [Coggins; Hjelm].

In exile, the Jews (Judeans) conspired with the Persians to overthrow the Babylonians. The Old Testament and other traditions state the Jews were rewarded by being given permission to return to their former capital of Jerusalem ca.450 BC. The initial leader was either Zerubbabel, grandson of the last King of Judah; or his uncle, whom Zerubbabel succeeded (ca. 538 and 520 BC). Zerubbabel was allegedly overthrown by a theocracy associated with Ezra the priest-scribe (ca.480–440 BC), a descendent of Zadok, high priest to King David and King Solomon (ca. 1000-925 BC); and Hilkiah, high priest to King Josiah (ca. 640-609 BC) [Bright: 372]. The theocracy not only completed the Second Temple but also collected, edited and finally canonised the books of the Old Testament [Van der Toorn]. Political instability, the replacement of Hebrew by Greek and Aramaic, religious fragmentation, a series of imperial masters culminating in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, massacres, the dispersal of the Jews, and the rise of Christianity threatened to reduce Judaism to a sect heading for oblivion like the Samaritans [Coggins; Hjelm].

Since the kingship was dead and the Promised Land forbidden territory, Judaism survived through the priesthood [Botticini and Eckstein]. If there was no priest to serve the far flung and often clandestine Jewish communities, they at first relied on oral memory of important sections of the Torah (Law of Moses). Eventually, they were able to adhere to a standard text. The definitive edition of the Old Testament was finally produced in about 950 AD, after four hundred and fifty years of meticulous research and cross checking by two priestly families in Galilee and Babylon known as the Masoretes [Alt, Albrecht et al:1967; Van der Toorn]. The original text produced by Ezra's group has not survived but a Greek translation (the Septuagint) was sponsored for Alexandrian Jews by King Ptolemy of Egypt (283 BC to 246 BC). The earliest surviving complete text of the Greek language Old Testament dates from the fourth century AD but fragments have been found of Old Testament texts written in

Hebrew that date from Ptolemy's era. Ezra's text was written without vowels, considered divine sounds, but the Greek edition had them. The Masoretic text was the first time the Old Testament had been written in vocalised Hebrew and Aramaic [Alt, Albrecht et al 1967].

Details of Christ's life are so nebulous that it is still possible to entertain various new interpretations of relations between his ministry and "established" forms of Judaism in Jerusalem of his era. Historically, after St Paul, Christianity's attitude towards Judaism has largely been contemptuous or violently hostile [Gilbert: maps and dates of persecutions]. In the case of Islam, Prophet Muhammad's relations with Arabian Judaism are well documented. Modern scholarship has argued that Islam was much beholden to Jewish traditions [Margoliouth, Montgomery, Torrey] but the two faiths went their separate ways when the Arabian Jews refused to accept Mohammad. In both cases, Christ and Muhammad, part if not much of their dispute with Second Temple Judaism seem to have been targeted at the work of Hilkiah and Ezra (see below in detail). Christians decided to include the Old Testament as part of their Holy Bible although there is a substantial gap in the historical narrative between the establishment of New Jerusalem's Second Temple ca.450 BC and the ministry of Christ. The Islamic Holy Qur'an has a different style to the Old and New Testaments but is very much concerned with the origins and legacies of both faiths. Islam respects the Old Testament since it shares much of the early history of Judaism [Margoliouth, Montgomery, Torrey]. Therefore, although Christianity and Islam rejected Judaism, and pagan Romans destroyed the Second Temple in AD 70, dispersing the Jewish population after the defeat of Bar Kochba in AD 135 [Bright: 411, 463], the Old Testament was not proscribed and had a profound effect on Western civilisation and Middle Eastern politics, especially because it maintains that Palestine is the divinely ordained Jewish Promised Land. During almost two thousand years of murderous persecution, the Old Testament provided inspiration for Jews, giving them hope that eventually they would find justice and security if they returned to Jerusalem to take control of their own destiny. Devout Jews and Christians believe the Old Testament is the Word of God.

Doubting the Bible, Old or New, has had severe consequences. After Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in AD 370, Christian dissenters, such as the Gnostics, were persecuted. Around 385 AD, Priscillian, Bishop of Ávila in Spain, was the first heretic to be executed [Flinn 2007: 346]. From about 1200 AD onwards, hundreds of thousands were executed in an immensely cruel fashion in the post-Roman European kingdoms, often after drawn-out appalling torture, for holding, or being suspecting of holding, deviatory views. Although most of the atrocities, in particular the persecution of the Jews, stemmed from the Christian New Testament, [Matthew 27:25] Christian authorities attacked scientists such as Copernicus (1473-1543) [Flinn:2007: 188-189] and Galileo (1564-1642) [Flinn:2007: 302-303], whose conclusions contradicted the Old Testament. Even communities that had fled religious persecution turned on their own. Four members of the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Boston Martyrs, were executed during the Puritan theocracy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony between 1659 and 1661 [Abbott 2011]. Further executions were forbidden by the command of King Charles II, whose own father, Charles I, had been beheaded for violating an Old Testament injunction concerning the power of kings [Hughes 2011; Old Testament Book of Numbers 35:33]. Charles I had been compared to Old Testament monarchs such as Ahab and Nebuchadnezzar. The last victim executed for heresy was in Spain in 1826. He was Cayetano Ripoll, a teacher and former soldier, found guilty of Deism [MacNevin 2010].

Despite the inadvisability of questioning Holy Writ, as copies of the "authorised" Hebrew Old Testament became more widely available, the Bible received closer scrutiny. Ibn

Khaldun (1332 –1406)³, an outstanding Muslim Tunisian polymath of eminent Yemeni origin from Hadhramaut, was the first major authority to question its veracity. For example, he dismissed the size of the Hebrew Exodus (603,550) but accepted that King Solomon had a force of 12,000 infantry and 1400 cavalry [Fischel 1968: 149-150].

Christian scrutiny followed. Andreas von Karlstadt (1486 – 1541) was chancellor of Wittenberg University and awarded Martin Luther his doctorate in 1512. In 1520 Karlstadt reasoned that Moses had not written the Torah (laws in the first five books of the Old Testament), and was excommunicated with Luther the following year [Burnett 2011; Hillerbrand 1996]. However, two major consequences of the Protestant reformation's dissemination of vernacular translations of the Old Testament were that its contents reached all sections of the community and it gradually became safer to contradict accepted wisdom. Andreas Masius (1514–1573), a Flemish Catholic expert on Syrian Christianity, suggested that Ezra had compiled the Torah, drawing from ancient documents. More progress was made with analysis undertaken by variety of scholars including Thomas Hobbes (1651), Baruch Spinoza (1677), Richard Simon (1682), Jean Astruc (1753), Wilhelm de Wette (1806), Johannes Eichom (1816-18), Wilhelm Vatke (1835), and Karl Heinrich Graf (1866). However, late in the 19th century, Bishop John Colenso of Natal (1814-1883) fell afoul of Church authorities for doubting the Old Testament [Draper 2003]. Colenso, a noted mathematician who supervised the translation of the Bible into Zulu, concluded that the original texts had been written by several authors in different eras. He had a lenient view towards polygamy and refused to teach the doctrine that Africans, being descendants of Ham [Old Testament Book of Genesis 9:25], were condemned for ever to be menial workers. Colenso, accused of heresy, was excommunicated as “a heathen man and a publican” [Morris 1966:190; Draper 2003]. Africa was becoming a prime target for medievalist Christian missionary work and eventually, in some areas, a bastion of authoritarian ultramontane conservatism.

A major challenge to conventional Old Testament wisdom came from Charles Darwin (1809-1882), whose *Origin of the Species* (1859) totally rejected the calculation by Archbishop Ussher (1581 –1656) that God created the world around 6 pm on 22 October 4004 BC [Matthew 2004] Biblical scholars therefore found purely textual analysis a safer option even though Darwin, a target of bitter criticism, had by 1870 succeeded in having his views widely accepted in lay circles. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), who presented convincing arguments that the books of the Hebrew Old Testament were originally written in different eras [Wellhausen 1882], nevertheless resigned as professor of theology at the University of Greifswald believing it was wrong for him to continue preparing students for a church career. Textual analysis continues. At present it is generally agreed that the Old Testament is drawn from many traditions and several texts. Wellhausen proposed four main written sources: J (Yahweh), E (Elohim), D (Deuteronomic) and P (Priestly). J was dated from Solomon's time, E from the divided kingdom, D from the Babylonian exile and P from the Persian period. J and E contributed to D, which Ezra had a major role in compiling. Since then, the text has been dissected to such an extent that there are subdivisions such as J¹, J², etc and letters for possible new sources such as L (Lay), S (a part of Genesis), G, (Foundation) etc. The original sources that contributed to J, E, D, P, et al have been listed as Canaanite law, folktales, myths, rituals and sanctuary takes; Hebrew tribal lore, rituals, folktales, tribal customs and sanctuary rituals [Nicholson 1998]. Martin Noth of Germany argued for a common basic source "G" (*Grundlage* for "ground-layer" or "foundation") upon which both J

³ Abū Zayd ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn al-Ḥaḍramī

and E are developed. One very important conclusion came from the Jewish scholar Julian Morgenstern (1881-1976), who believed that the oldest document was K (Kenites) [Nicholson 1998: 44]. Moses' father in law was Jethro the Kenite.

Christians believing in Christ's Second Coming were reluctant to abandon ingrained certainties about the Bible and this was one reason for their support for the Zionist Movement. They reasoned that if the Jews returned to their ancestral homeland, it would be a sign of the imminent fulfilment of Christian prophecies. The British occupation of Palestine in 1917 provided an opportunity to counter scepticism by proving the Old Testament was true. This led to major archaeological investigation from 1920 onwards [Albright 1949], which coincided with increasing immigration of Jews fleeing persecution in Poland, Hungary and Germany [Lacquer & Baumel:2001:476-7, 314, 241]. However, by the 1970's, major archaeologists had serious reservations about the accuracy of Old Testament [Kenyon, Pritchard]. A bitter debate erupted between the true believers (maximalists) [Bright, Dahlberg, Dever, Greenfield, Hammond, A. Mazar, B. Mazar, W. Sibley Towner], and sceptics (minimalists) [Finkelstein, Herzog, Lemche, Sand, Silberman, Thompson, Van Seter, Whitelam]. Eventually a compromise was reached. Most now agree that there was some truth in Old Testament history but it had been highly exaggerated. They concluded that Solomon, if he had existed, would have been headman of a petty mud village in a forlorn arid semi moonscape, possibly with a captive scribe flattering him with tales of wonder and heroism, transforming the resident vulture into flocks of peacocks, and the headman and his wife into a magnificent Israelite monarch and the Queen of Sheba. Consequently, in place of the once highly prestigious but now discredited discipline of *Biblical* archaeology, major universities, even in Israel, now offer *Near Eastern* archaeology. However, judging from Internet websites, online discussions and reference works such as the *Oxford Bible Atlas*, this has had minimal if any impact on popular culture.

In the wake of the failure of Holy Land archaeologists to confirm the Old Testament historical account some somewhat minuscule schools of thought have emerged in addition to the maximalists and minimalists, which are discussed first.

The Traditional View (Maximalists)

The traditional or maximalist approach dates from ca.450 BC. Its strength is that it appears to be a logical interpretation of the Old Testament narrative. The hypothesis is largely discredited because no evidence has been found to support any of the Old Testament events before the Babylonian captivity ca. 586 BC. Nevertheless, it has considerable support in faith-based circles, who cannot accept that vital parts of the text were falsified by Ezra's circle ca. 450 BC claiming Palestine was the location of Ancient Israel and Judah. Nevertheless, the Israelite kingdom of David and Solomon may have extended to include parts of the Holy Land. The deciphering of the Tel Dan Stele, which may mention David, is very controversial [Thompson 1999a: 203]. The Kurkh monolith seems to discuss Ahab, King of Israel [Greenspahn: 11; Golden: 275] and the Moabite or Mesha Stele (discovered 1868) speaks of his father King Omri [A. Mazar 1990: 542]. The inscription on the Moabite Stele closely resembles 2 Kings 3:4-8 in the Old Testament and it is highly likely that Omri King of Israel, ruled territory to the south east of the Holy Land and attacked Moab to the north.

Minimalists

The Minimalist continuum ranges from scholars who believe that the Old Testament is fantasy to those who think it contains some truth. Expedient minimalists are characterised by

former minimalists, such as Professor Israel Finkelstein and other Israeli archaeologists, who have moved back to a more central position, not wholly denying the Old Testament but suggesting it was exaggerated [Finkelstein & Neil Silberman 2006] This implies that if the major figures in the historical narrative such as Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba existed, they would only have been of little consequence with insignificant careers. Neil Silberman, a leading minimalist, implied to this writer by email that, given Israel's volatile religious and political atmosphere (e.g. the murder of Dr Al Glock [Fox 2001], it was advisable for writers to support the "exaggerated" hypothesis rather than suggest events occurred in West Arabia.

The North-West Arabian hypothesis

The north-west Arabian hypothesis argues that the Old Testament is a true account that occurred in the Lower Nile/Delta area and north-west Arabia, not Palestine. Evidence for this hypothesis was presented by a number of 19th century and early 20th century academics [C. T. Beke, T. K Cheyne, Reinhart Pieter Dozy, Heinrich Graetz, F. Hommel, W. V. Kelly, H. Oort, A. H. Sayce, N. Schmidt, J. Taylor, J. Wilson, and H. Winckler]. This theory is backed by evidence (the Moabite Stone) that King Omri of Israel was based south of modern Jordan and the belief that King Solomon controlled the important trade route crossroads of Taima in northern Hijaz [Pritchard 1974: 47, 87]. Its weakness lies in lack of evidence of a Hebrew presence in northern Egypt or the Exodus in Sinai. Cheyne was chastised for his views by Arthur Peake (1865–1929), Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the (Victoria) University of Manchester for crossing "at last the boundaries of sanity" [Katz: 368 footnote 38].

The Jewish Homeland hypothesis

This hypothesis is related to Zionism, which acknowledged that Jews would never find security unless they controlled their own country [Herzl 1896; Braverman 2010: 57]. There is no doubt that Jews inhabited Palestine after 450 BC and also engaged in substantial local forced conversions [Gilbert:13]. This hypothesis argues that Jews have a right to Palestine because that was their homeland from where the Romans expelled them. It is therefore of no concern if the pre-450 BC events of the Old Testament are true or not.

Judaism Denial?

Professor Thomas L. Thompson, whose work was highly influential in convincing many scholars that Israelite history from Moses to the Babylonian destruction was fantasy, now implies that the Old Testament is fake history and Judaism an invented religion concocted by the 5th century BC marginalised elitist Jerusalem circle associated with Ezra the Zadokite priest-scribe and the prophet politician Nehemiah [Thompson 1999a: 189-190; Thompson 1999b: 238]. The charge of an invented religion with a fake history has, in modern times, been levelled at the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and the Church of Scientology. Thompson believes that around 450 BC Nehemiah and Ezra's circle, drawing on popular culture and taking the opportunity of more freedom under Persian rule, wrote the Old Testament with a detailed code of laws to gain control of Jerusalem and its surroundings [Thompson 1999a; Thompson 1999b]. Strangely, for an academic whose career was nearly destroyed by established scholars who refused to examine his minimalist arguments, Thompson was not only aware of African and Arabian evidence that considerably pre-dated 450 BC and contradicted his argument but also chose not to mention let alone discuss it. This writer wrote to Thompson about the African evidence and the Salibi hypothesis. Thompson replied by email on 21 August 2000 on the idea that Old and New Jerusalem were not the same place:

“We need a scenario to explain how the misunderstanding of the tradition’s geography came about. Conspiracy theories are difficult at best.”

Yet, Thompson implies the Ezra and Nehemiah group instigated an immense conspiracy that invented Judaism and the history of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, Thompson is probably correct that Ezra, along with his ancestor Hilkiah, at the very least heavily doctored the Old Testament. However, given the recent obscenity of Holocaust Denial, Thompson might have been more cautious in championing what could be construed as *Judaism Denial* and instead, given his prestige as a critical Old Testament Biblical scholar, convened the major conference denied to Kamal Salibi (below) especially because he is very much aware of the Salibi hypothesis and its popularity in Palestinian circles [Thompson 2009].

The Salibi Hypothesis

Professor Kamal Salibi (1929-2011), a highly respected authority on the History of Arabia and the Lebanon [Salibi 1980, 1993] argued that the history of the Hebrew from Abraham, including the Egyptian captivity and the Exodus, the establishment of the Israelites states and the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, occurred in south-west Arabia [Salibi 1985: 14, 15]. Salibi’s hypothesis makes considerable strategic and economic sense regarding the zenith under David and Solomon and is far more scientific than the amateurish, haphazard, almost comical approach by Edward Robinson (1794-1863) when “officially” naming Old Testament locations [Robinson 1841; Albright 1949: 25-26 – Albright and most subsequent scholars accepted Robinson’s conclusions]. However, although the Egyptians were involved in West Arabia and Yemen, Salibi is not convincing when he claims the Hebrew captivity was in West Arabia, not Egypt, and Moses (whom he suggested may be several people with the same name) dealt with a local Egyptian official in Arabia not the pharaoh [Salibi 1985: 93]. Salibi downplayed the crossing of the Red Sea, claiming it concerned a flash flood that swept the pursuing Egyptian force into a sea of sand. [Salibi 1988: 160]. He treated some poetry and the story of Joseph in the original unvocalised text merely as geographical directions and allusions to a pagan god [Salibi 1988: 119-125], besides ignoring the African evidence. Salibi initially based his Arabian Judah hypothesis on place names in the 1978 Saudi Gazette of Place Names, unaware of Chaim Rabin’s *Ancient West Arabian* [1951] that expressed astonishment at the amount of Hebrew grammar and vocabulary found in West Arabian dialects. In the November 1991 issue of the *International Journal of Mideast Studies*, Professor John Joseph of Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, unsuccessfully called for a conference to discuss Salibi’s ideas [Leeman 2009a:148] and Salibi never recovered from the thousand spiteful cuts from the not yet discredited maximalists to whom the epithet “Professor Silly-Billy” [*Jewish Chronicle Review* quoted in Salibi’s obituary in *The Independent* Oct 19, 2011] carried far more weight than his years of meticulous research. Of particular interest is his suggestion that the original Hebrew text concerning the countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Sheba sometimes referred to cities in West Arabia, which appears to verify the journey of the Ark of the Covenant as described in the Ethiopic *Kebra Nagast* [Leeman 2009a, 2009b, 2011].

Arabian Abraham, Nubian Moses, Arabian Solomon Judah

Very often it is not what is said or written but who did it. Important factors include monopoly, dominance, affiliation, class, race, gender, and especially status. An independent, Middle Eastern or African academic has much less chance of having work accepted than a mediocre academic at a renowned Western university. The debate concerning Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* had been kept “in house” because Darwin’s respective supporters -

Huxley, Wallace, Gray, Haeckel, and Weismann; and opponents – Wilberforce, Owen, Agassiz and others - were all from the same Western European cultural background as were Wellhausen (1844-1918) and others involved in the “documentary hypothesis” approach to the Torah (Law of Moses). The same attitude prevailed during the acrimonious maximalist-minimalist divide concerning the veracity of the Old Testament. While Darwin’s ideas had a significant impact among Arabic speaking intellectuals, it appears nobody in Europe cared what they thought [Elshakry2014]. Salibi, a Presbyterian elder, would have gained far more respect from Biblical scholars had he been a Western European or White American. Although diminishing in prestige, White Anglo-Saxon Protestantism and traditional Jewish interpretations of Biblical history remain foundation in Western culture. Discussions on the Old Testament are an issue for the elect, not outsiders. Even Salibi had his own pecking order, with scant regard for African Old Testament evidence outside Egypt - viewing African Judaism as an extension of Arabian Judah. However, Salibi’s work has not only renewed interest in Islamic and Jewish Nubian traditions about Moses but also discredited almost all works on the Beta Israel (“Black Jews of Ethiopia/Falasha”), probably the most researched of all African peoples. Although similar ideas of an Arabian Judah had been put forward before the rise of Zionism, Salibi will probably be remembered as a major scholar in proving the Old Testament was a true story.

The *Nubian Moses Arabian Solomon* hypothesis accepts that the Old Testament blends traditions and beliefs from two major sources – Hebrew and Canaanite. It argues that Abraham led a substantial migration, probably to Palestine and north-west Arabia, and dealt with Egyptians in the Delta area. The Hebrew then moved into Egypt under Jacob (aka Israel) and remained there until Moses led them from captivity. The branch of the Hebrew associated with Ishmael occupied Arabia. Abraham’s legacy was also probably strong among “Salibi’s” Canaanites of West Arabia. Old Testament minimalists (and also William Dever, a former maximalist) have pointed out that the Egyptian records make no mention of the Hebrew, let alone the Exodus [Dever in Bard 1999:459]. However, the minimalists were following the Ezra-Nehemiah account of a Hebrew captivity in northern Egypt and an Exodus in Sinai. Evidence from the south in the area colonised by the pharaohs in Nubia (Sudan) during the New Kingdom suggests that if Moses was from Egypt he was more likely to have begun his career in Nubia. Josephus commented that the reason why Jews had so much influence in Cleopatra’s reign and Christian era Egypt was that they were originally from there [Thompson 1999a: 261].

The Egyptians first penetrated into Nubia between 2081-2055 BC but then withdrew [Shaw 2003: 158; Bard 1999: 701; Bunson 2002: 281; Edwards 2004: 78]. Another expedition restored authority soon afterwards and the local population gradually became assimilated partly through the nomarch feudal system, recruitment of Nubian troops and the raising of hostage sons of local leaders at Egyptian government centres. Under Pharaoh Senuwoset III (ca.1872-1839), the Egyptians launched a number of brutal campaigns against rebellious Nubians and established forts [Bard 1999: 694-695]. Mining camps were established, particularly to extract gold. The word Nubia apparently comes from *Nub*, the Egyptian word for gold [Klemm, Klemm and Murr 2001:653] and the campaigns of Sesostri I (ca 1956-1911 BC) were probably launched to seize control of the Nubian Nile goldfields [Klemm, Klemm and Murr 2001: 649]. Gold mining in that area was at its zenith ca. 1480-1340 BC [Klemm, Klemm and Murr 2001: 664]. Nubia became an Egyptian major gold mining centre. It is also interesting to note that the gold mining areas down to the Third Cataract were sparsely populated [Edwards 2004:111] which hints that, since the old corvée system of public works had temporarily broken down [Bunson 2002: 88-89], slave labour was needed.

The Hebrew tradition of a 460 year captivity places their enslavement ca. 1630 BC, the end of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom and the start of the 17th Dynasty (2nd Intermediate Period). Bunson [2002:89] dates the need for slaves instead of corvée labour ca. 1640–1550 BC. This is a significant date also because it marks the division of Egypt with the Hyksos ruling in the north and the Egyptians ruling from Thebes in the south. This forced the Egyptians south to exploit Nubia and establish stronger links with Punt, notably by sea under Queen Hatshepsut (1508–1458 BC) [Bard 1999: 774]. The Egyptians certainly enslaved defeated Nubians on a huge scale for gold mining [Berg & Berg 1998: 4]. Given that the Hebrew were enslaved for 460 years and led to freedom ca. 1300-1200 BC, it is of interest that archaeological evidence testifies that a different “Pan Grave” people began settling among the Nubian population ca. 1650 BC [Edwards 2004:98-101]. Moses’ experience as a local royal hostage undergoing Egyptian assimilation also reflects Egyptian treatment of subject Nubians. If the Hebrew were indeed held captive in Nubia, it would explain their seeming rootlessness, their exposure to a bull deity (Apis) and a connection with gold (the Golden Calf). Arab sources and the Jewish historian Josephus both link Moses to Nubia. Jewish and Muslim traditions state that Moses defeated other magicians at a contest in Egypt [Old Testament Book of Exodus 7:10-13; Qur’an 20:12] which may be at Naw, near Dongola in Nubia on the Nile [Interview with Dr Musaab Elzain, Dublin 5 July 2015], while Josephus states that Moses led the Egyptian army against Kush, which can mean Sudan, Kush (Nubia) or Ethiopia. Josephus’s statement that the Queen of Sheba ruled Egypt and Ethiopia [Josephus 1987; Leeman 2009a: 69-70] perhaps, however, refers to two cities in south west Arabia, as suggested by Kamal Salibi [Salibi 1985:52-56; Leeman 1994].

The Old Testament has a wealth of detail concerning the Prophet Moses, who is the founding patriarch of Judaism. Moses was born during the Hebrew captivity. Looking at the details of this defining early period in Jewish history, evidence suggests that the captivity did not occur in the Lower Egypt- Nile Delta area as traditionalists believe. The Old Testament says Moses was an assimilated Hebrew, which meant he was from his people’s hierarchy. The status of his siblings indicates he was from a hereditary priesthood. He fled to Midian after killing an Egyptian overseer. He found shelter with the Midians/Kenites and married Zipporah, a Cushite and daughter of the Midian/Kenite leader Jethro (Shuyab). Commentators have usually placed Midian in north west Arabia [Bright 2004: Plate III]. Salibi believed it was in north west Yemen near Jabal an Nabi al-Shuyab (Mountain of the Prophet Jethro) [Salibi 1988: 143-151] but Internet debates sometimes speculate that Median was one and the same as the territory of the Medjay of Nubia. Moses returned to Egypt with an enhanced priestly status and openly defied the Egyptian pharaoh in a time of natural disasters, external setbacks and weakening central control. He persuaded the pharaoh that the disasters were punishment for defying the Hebrew god and was initially allowed to lead the Hebrew to freedom. However, the pharaoh then reneged on his promise and set out on pursuit. In an epic journey known as the Exodus, the Hebrew crossed the Red Sea in a miraculous fashion as God parted the water, which then swept back to overwhelm the pursuing Egyptians. The Hebrew journeyed on to the foot of Mount Sinai where The One True God gave them the Law and a Promised Land [Karesh & Hurvitz 2006: 342].

Besides being a high ranking hostage from a subject people, Moses was a monotheist religious leader and soldier of some magnitude even before the crossing of the Red Sea. Egyptian society was not static. It was subject to social, political, and economic fluctuations as well as external aggression. It has been suggested that Moses was a priest of the monotheist cult of Pharaoh Akhenakon (ca.1353 – 1334 BC) or even the pharaoh himself [Osman 1990], whose memory later dynasties tried to obliterate. One advantage Moses may

have had over other religious cults was that as an assimilated Egyptian he was literate in an age where the written word had divine connotations.

Most probably Jethro and the Midians played a much more substantial part on the development of Judaism than is acknowledged in the Old Testament especially in supporting Moses against the worshippers of the Golden Calf. Jethro was certainly a monotheist and is highly respected in Judaism, Islam and by the Druze [Salibi 2005]. He is associated with metal working, probably iron [Mondriaan 2011: 437]. The Qur'an states (26:176-177) that Jethro was a prophet to the Midianites and "the people of the woods", which is another name for Hebrew [Salibi 1985:151-156]. The question remains whether or not Jethro was a Medjay. The Medjay were originally a nomadic militaristic Nubian people barred from entering Egyptian territory. However, their martial ability eventually persuaded the Egyptians to hire them as mercenaries [Healy and McBride 1992:8; Bard 1999: 584-585] and they evolved into an elite paramilitary force responsible for guarding royal residences, gold mines and other important sites as well as providing security for Egyptian settlers in Nubia [Edwards: 2004:99-100]. It is highly probable that the Medjay were used to march and guard a slave mining expedition to Tigray in Ethiopia to exploit the newly discovered gold fields. Initial communications would have been by land following the Nile to the Atbara and then to the Tekazze into Tigray [Török 2009; Hatke 2013 writes of very ancient land trade links]. The history of gold mining suggests that from antiquity experienced gold miners were brought in to exploit new finds rather than use local inexperienced slave labour seized from a hostile population. After the opening of the Tigray gold mines, the Egyptian pharaoh Queen Hatshepsut (ca 1508-1458) established a nearby major Red Sea port at Adulis from where gold, ivory, slaves, hides and exotic goods from Yemen and India were shipped north to Wadi Hammamat [Njoku: 29-31]. Hebrew (specifically described as *black*) were certainly there shortly after King Solomon's era as witnessed by Sabaeen inscriptions on two incense burners retrieved from separate temples on either side of Adi Kaweh, the main settlement (and probably Hebrew capital) of D'MT as late as AD 970 [Leeman 2015].

Although Nubia has a fascinating past, it is not yet possible difficult to the nature of its religion and to what extent its culture was influenced by Egypt and vice versa. If the Old Testament account is true, the captive Hebrew were a monotheist people separate to the local population and developed their own priesthood. The presence of Black Hebrew in the Tigray gold mining area is not the only indication that the Hebrew and their religion contained a substantial, even dominant, African element. The Jews possess a genetic marker linked to the hereditary priesthood established by Moses' brother Aaron. Jews as a whole have 5% of this special genetic marker. The priests of the Ashkenazim ("European") Jews have 45% while the priests of the Sephardic ("Oriental") Jews have 53%. The Lemba of southern Africa, whose faith resembles a form of early Hebrew religion, have 9% and its priesthood, the Buba, 58%. The Lemba are therefore genetically the most Jewish of all populations. Their traditions link them to Nubia or a southern Arabian port [Thomas et al 2000]. A major flaw in researching Judaic "remnant" groups is the preconception that they are outliers of an ancestral group based in ancient Palestine, rather than one based in Nubia. If a high percentage of the Cohen Modal Haplotype Hebrew priestly genetic marker is found among modern Nubians, it would appear conclusive evidence of Moses' origin.

Other Black Judaic groups include the "Black Jews" of Cochin, so long established that they had been allotted status within the Hindu caste system, adhered to Mosaic dietary laws but seem to have existed without a priesthood [Karesh & Hurvitz 2006: 227]. The religion of the Qemant of Ethiopia is "pagan-Hebraic" with priests named Wambar [Gamst 1969: 39-43]

and the Qemant share some elements with the Lemba. Some groups such as the Yibir/Ibro of Somalia and the Inadan of Niger are nominal Muslims [Kirk 1905:184, Farah 2006:6, Leeman 2009a, 2009b] but are regarded by their overlords, and often by themselves, as Hebrew [Leeman 2009a: 66-67]. Their customs and beliefs reflect pre-First Temple Hebrew practices. In addition, the general Cushitic culture of Ethiopia and Eritrea is very Hebraic, indicating that either there was early exposure to Hebrew ideas [Ullendorff 1967: 113-115] or the Hebrew religion emerged from that cultural background. From these examples it appears that an African Abrahamic population, served by hereditary priests, existed in the region between the Nile and Ethiopia practising a form of “Sacred Garden” Judaism. Moses and Aaron were most probably from that background but, being exposed to literacy and other ideas through Egyptian assimilation, interaction with the Midians and the experiences of the Exodus, developed a more complex faith with a divine purpose and divine law once they crossed the Red Sea.

The Old Testament contains a very strong racist element against black people, stating that because of disrespect for his father Noah, the descendants of Ham, his black son, would be forever condemned to menial servitude [Genesis 9: 25]. Although the inscriptions at Adi Kaweh describe local society about 150 years after Solomon, the emphasis on “red” Sabaeans and “black” Hebrew reflects a very ancient division that continues till this day whereby in Ethiopia and Eritrea Semitic speakers are classed as “red” and Cushitic speakers as “black.” Martin Flad, a 19th century missionary in Ethiopia, noted that the Beta Israel, First Temple Israelites, recited H[Flad 1869; Leslau 1951:xxi]. Smithsonian Journeys May 17, 2010; Traditionally, scholars believed Moses dealt with Pharaoh Ramesses II (ca. 1279-1213 BC) [Bright: 95]. The Egyptians initially moved into Nubia during the period of the Old Kingdom (ca. 2613-2181 BC) from where they at first imported ebony and ivory but later copper, gold, exotic animals, slaves, concubines, and incense [Edwards 2004: 167; Bunson 2002: 281]. Incense indicated that there was a trade route with South Arabia, Somalia, and “Punt” (the coast and hinterland of modern Eritrea and Djibuti; and parts of modern Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia [Kitchen 1971; Bunson 2002: 318-319]. The Egyptians were probably heavily involved in overland trade with Punt before they established a sea route ca. 2000 BC between Punt and the end of Wadi Hammamat (a source of granite and gold), the trail that ran for two hundred kilometres from the coast to the Egyptian capital of Thebes on the Nile. Amenemhet I (1991 BC to 1962 BC) consolidated gains in Nubia, used Nubian troops, and developed a feudal administrative system along with co-regency rule [Murnane 1977].

The Egyptians took the children of subject peoples to be raised at court as Egyptians partly as hostages but also to serve as assimilated bilingual administrators although the Old Testament states that Moses was not fluent in Hebrew and had to rely on his brother Aaron in public addresses [Old Testament Book of Exodus 4:30-31]. Secondly, the Old Testament mentions mass slave labour, a cattle cult and gold, which indicate a Nubian origin. Whereas labour in Lower Egypt and the Delta involved serfs with labour obligations [Bunson 2002: 88-89], the Egyptians used slave labour in their gold mines in Nubia and elsewhere [Berg & Berg: 4]. Thirdly, it is significant that Nubia was a centre for a major cattle religious cult, reinforced by Egyptian respect for the bull deity, Apis, god of strength and fertility, a major cult during the period associated with Moses [Bunson 2002: 43]. Pharaoh Ramesses II “the Great” was renowned for public works and fathering numerous children but the events following his reign were marked by administrative breakdown, fragmentation, external military stalemate and withdrawal from some New Eastern territory [Thompson 1999: 153].

The Merneptah or *Israel Stele*, ca. 1213 -1203 BC, was discovered in 1896 at Thebes (modern Luxor) in Egypt by a team led by Flinders Petrie. Petrie’s generation assumed the Old Testament narrative was rooted in Palestine. They therefore believed the stele

commemorated victories against Palestinian Canaanite cities and a nomadic raiding people named (in hieroglyphs) **I.si.ri.ar**. Many scholars believe that **I.si.ri.ar** is the earliest mention of Israelites. Bearing in mind the demise of “Old Testament in Palestine”, it is more likely that the Israelites were raiders from nearby Nubia. The stele, dated to when many authorities believe the Exodus occurred, commemorates their defeat. Ramesses II’s successor Merenptah (1213-1203 BC) would probably be a better candidate for Moses’s pharaoh as his stele records “Israel is no more” which may be euphemism for “The Israelites escaped” [Bard 1999: 460].

Most authorities place the Exodus ca. 1200 in an era marked by volcanic activity and other natural disasters but fixation on Palestine as the Promised Land has led traditionalists to consider the Thira/Santorini volcanic eruption [Gates & Richie 2007: xv]. Salibi appears to be the major investigator on volcanic activity in northern Yemen that might be linked to the Exodus and supports his hypothesis with Qur’anic references and Arab traditions [Salibi 1985: 35-36, 43, 81, 92, 205 note 6, 209 note 15]. The Old Testament lists the Nile turning to blood, plagues of frogs, lice, flies and locusts, skin diseases (boils), livestock deaths, a hail and fire storm, three days of darkness and the deaths of firstborn children [Old Testament Book of Exodus 7-12; Smith 2011: 40]. Egyptian records suggest the events occurred during the reign of Ramesses III, which witnessed labour strikes and “something in the air” indicating a volcanic eruption [Yurco 1999]. There is no certainty about his dates but the years 1186-1155 BC are often suggested which place him close to but slightly after Merenptah. Jabal Haylan in Yemen (15.43°N 44.78E) erupted in about 1200 BC [<http://www.volcanolive.com/haylan.html>; <http://volcano.si.edu/volcano.cfm?vn=231110>] and was probably responsible for the sun being blotted out and arrested global tree growth in Egypt until 1140 BC [Yurco 1999].

The insecurity, resentment at enslavement, breakdown of central control and ecological disaster may have persuaded the Hebrew to escape from Nubia rather than seize control of the area where they lived, indicating that they were an imported captive people who had been allowed to retain their social and religious structure. They would have had contact, either directly or through their Medjay supervisors, with the Hebrew in Tigray in Ethiopia/Eritrea and thus aware of a route south and hope perhaps of freedom in a new land. Internal pressures may have exacerbated tensions through the Egyptian empire and Moses could have used his power as a religious leader, Hebrew prince and his status with the Medjay to convince them to unite against the Egyptians. The rebellion could have begun in Nubia and the combined Hebrew gold mining –Medjay force would have fled from the Egyptians with looted gold, along the Nile-Atbara-Tekazze route to the Ethiopian/Eritrean highlands, where they would have swept up the Hebrew-Medjay at the gold mines, looted more gold, and headed for the Red Sea. It is significant that the Egyptian record of Israel being “no more” belongs to the same era when all mention of the Medjay ceased [Bard 1999: 585], gold production ceased in the Nubian desert ca. 1300-1100 BC [Klemm, Klemm and Murr 2001: 654] and volcanic activity took place opposite Eritrea. An exodus from Nubia that gathered up skilled gold miners and highly militarised nomads might explain why the Hebrew were so numerous and also effective warriors despite centuries of slavery.

Until Old Testament scholarship fell into disrepute, it was assumed that the Hebrew quit Egypt either across the northern end of the Red Sea or across a *reed* sea in the Delta marshland. The Hebrew words in the Masoretic text are “Yam Suph” so the original would have been *YmSph* [Fritz 2006:14-15]. Salibi suggests that it referred to a sea of sand [Salibi 1985: 1170-172]. There has been no consensus on the meaning and authorities are influenced

by a conscious effort trying to place it to the Delta/Sinai area. Egyptian records do not mention the Hebrew captivity let alone their escape and the parting of the Red Sea [Bard 1999: 459-60], but researchers have always been looking for evidence in the north, not in Nubia and the Bab el Mandeb straits. Moreover, the Egyptians had garrisons and mines in Sinai [Sperveslage & Eichmann 2012: 372-376] and would certainly have launched a new offensive against the Hebrew if they were in Sinai for forty years after leaving Egypt.

Religions, emphasising their link with the divine, often tell of personal communication with God or a supernatural being or a miraculous origin. In Judaism, God made a covenant with Abraham and renewed it with Moses. However, Moses had to crush the cult of the Golden Calf, which seems strange if he had recently completed a miraculous crossing of the Red Sea apparently through divine intervention. Such a miracle should surely have stifled rival beliefs. It is more probable that the Hebrew host crossed a temporary land bridge between Eritrea and Yemen as the tectonic plate beneath the Red Sea at Bab el Mandeb lifted during volcanic activity in Yemen ca.1200 BC (Jabal Haylan) and then sank as an Egyptian force attempted to follow. The Bab el Mandeb means “Gate of Tears” recalling an Arab legend of a land bridge between Arabia and Africa that gave way causing widespread destruction and death [1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 3]. Jabal Haylan is 63 Km ENE of Sana’a, the Yemeni capital, and its emissions may have been the “pillar of fire and cloud (smoke?)” of the Exodus. In 1997 a team of Canadian archaeologists [Keall 1997] discovered a ring of large monoliths on the coastal plain below Jabal al-Nabi Shu’ayb (Mount Jethro, after Moses’s father in law), dating from about 1800 BC, an era much older than the Exodus, but fits the description in Exodus 24:4 when the Hebrew erected pillars to represent the tribes. An Arab tradition states that the Hebrew were driven from their land by volcanic activity, [Salibi 1985: 209 note 15] which persuaded Salibi to place their origin somewhere in the “Ring of Fire” in northern Yemen. When Salibi suggested Mount Sinai was either Jabal al-Nabi Shu’ayb or a neighbouring peak [Salibi1988: 145], he was not only unaware of Chaim Rabin’s linguistic work but also of the *Sheba-Menelik Cycle* of the *Kebra Nagast*, a vital document in making sense of the Old Testament⁴, which states that Mount Sinai was opposite Eritrea [Leeman 2011: 2]⁵. However, the Midrash states that Mount Sinai was one of the lowest peaks in the area, although no consensus has been reached as to its exact location [Kareish & Hurvitz 2006: 342].

Evidence hints that the Hebrew passed through Ethiopia/Eritrea to cross the southern end of the Red Sea. The “pagan-Hebaic” Qemant live where the Hebrew would have entered Ethiopia along the Atbara-Tekazze route and do not possess the Torah. They revere Abraham more than Moses [Gamst: 29-43]. Their immediate neighbours, the Beta Israel, a First Temple Israelite population appear to be a mixture of Hebraic and First Temple people from both sides of the Red Sea. Martin Flad [1866:16] recorded one tradition that some of their ancestors arrived in Ethiopia from the Nile. Their epithet “Falasha” meaning “exiles” Flad

⁴ The *Kebra Nagast* has not been adequately investigated because its geography seems ludicrous to “accepted” Biblical scholarship. Hubbard could not read Ge’ez, Bezold translated it into fake Lutheran German and Wallis-Budge produced a work that was in fake King James English. He maybe also have translated most of it from Bezold’s German not Ge’ez. Bezold and Budge both altered the meaning of some geographical references to suit a Judah sited in Palestine as did the 4th century redactors. This writer is convinced the original *Sheba Menelik Cycle* dates from Solomon’s time.

⁵ This writer wrote often to Salibi on this issue and was disappointed that he ignored it, along with other academics with whom he had corresponded such as Leslau, Munro-Hay, Pankhurst, Parfitt, Phillipson, Roland Oliver, Thompson, and Ullendorff. Eventually, shortly before his death, Salibi realised that the *Kebra Nagast* text was important and threw light on the career of Jeremiah.

[1866:16] states their area was a traditional dumping ground for those who did not accept Christianity and the name for their house for payer “mesgid” and the word “Falasha” are of South Arabian origin [Biella:405; Leslau 1991:363]. Falasha is also a translation of the Hebrew word *Hebrew* meaning, *a nomad, a wanderer who has crossed over*, [USC Emeritus Prof Gerald A. Larue: *Who were the Hebrew?* Jewish Virtual Library] with connotations of being banished, an outcast, an outsider, an alien or a refugee. DNA tests support the Beta Israel traditions of diverse origins. One conclusion links them to Sudan [Omer 2013] while another suggests a part of them originated from Yemen ca. AD 500 [Entine 2007], probably as captives from Caleb of Aksum’s AD 520’s crusade against the Jewish messiah Yūsuf As’ar Yath’ar (aka Dhu Nuwas) [Hatke 2013:149,152]. However, another nickname “Kayla” means “did not cross over” [Appleyard:182], probably a reference to part of their group descended from Qemant-like Hebrew, maybe originally from Sudan. “Hebrew people” in Sabaeen and Hebrew has a second meaning of “cross over.” [Biella:350]. Nor did the Hebrew abandon Ethiopia/Eritrea as it seems to have served as a refuge and rallying point for the House of Zadok as well as retaining the purest aspects of Judaism. The Torah brought to Ethiopia by the Zadokite high priest Azariah during Solomon’s reign and respected by the Beta Israel supports Thompson’s assertion that the Nehemiah-Ezra group did indeed doctor the Torah, adding hundreds of new laws [Thompson 1999; Leeman 2015a]. However, it is probable that much of the work was undertaken by his ancestor Hilkiah, something the Jewish Encyclopedia [1996] believed was “inconceivable.” Hilkiah restored the Zadokite high priesthood in Judah after a three hundred year absence [Benjamin Mazar: 1992:98], perhaps in Ethiopia/Eritrea. David Hubbard [1956], who analysed the sources of the Ethiopic Kebra Nagast, believed its Old Testament quotations, which differed from the “official” version, came from a highly regarded alternative source. Salibi and Edward Ullendorff suggested that the heavily Judaic nature of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church indicated hundreds of years’ exposure to pre-Christian era Judaism. It is possible that before the arrival of the Nine Saints, monophysite zealots [Wallis-Budge Volume 1: 152; Ullendorff 1960: 102], the Semitic speaking population of northern Ethiopia and Eritrea were pagan/Hebraic while the Cushitic speaking Beta Israel were First Temple Israelites. Nor were the First Temple Israelites isolated, for their sacred texts such as the *Book of Enoch* and the *Book of Jubilees* show that they had links with First Temple Israelites elsewhere that were not part of the Nehemiah-Ezra Second Temple Palestine tradition.

According to the Caleb Cycle, one or more of the Nine Saints persuaded the Aksumite monarch that he was the kinsman of Jesus Christ, through shared descent from King Solomon, and that the Beta Israel were Christ killing Jews. Thus a wedge was driven between the two communities that doomed the Beta Israel. The Beta Israel probably had links with First Temple Israelite and Second Temple Jewish groups in Yemen that were terminated after Caleb’s invasion, the defeat of Jewish Himyar and the rise of Islam. The Plague of Justinian gave the Ethiopian Hebraic Agaw and Beta Israel groups some respite because the Aksumite rulers, whose Semitic speaking population had been decimated, used them in increasing numbers in the military and administration. However, it appears that Christian proselytising and other factors caused a violent backlash under the “pagan-Hebraic” or “Beta Israel” Queen Yodit of D’mt [Wallis-Budge Volume 1: 153-154; Ullendorff 1960: 60-61; Leeman 2015], the overthrow of the Solomonid dynasty and the establishment of the Zagwe dynasty that claimed descent from Moses [Tamrat 1972: 64-68; Rapoport 1981: 69; Kaplan 1992:47; Quirin 1992: 41; Old Testament Book of Numbers, 12:1] but was nevertheless fervently Christian. The Semitic-speaking Solomonid dynasty returned and persecuted the Beta Israel to such an extent that they accepted evacuation to Israel in the 1980’s. [Kaplan 1992; Rapoport 1986; Kaplan 1992; Bard 2002].

Much analysis depends on how Moses consolidated his control over the Hebrew depends on whether Jethro was a powerful local Yemeni or refugee Nubian leader. In either case his support was probably vital to Moses when confronting the cult of the Golden Calf. Muslims believe that he was sent as a prophet to two communities, the Midianites and the People of the Woods, which is another name for Hebrew [Salibi 1985:151-156], although Muslims do not mention any link with Moses. He was also a Kenite. Aforementioned, Julian Morgenstern singled out what he believed to be the oldest section of the Old Testament - "K," which, while in fragmentary form, preserved a tradition of Moses' relationships with the Kenites. Jewish sources state that the Kenites were metal workers [Mondriaan 2011] which probably meant they were early Iron Age blacksmiths and therefore armourers. Egypt was still a Bronze Age country when Moses left [Bunson 2002: xiv; Edwards 2004: 13,138, 147, 170, 173-174] so it is probable that the Iron Age was penetrating into Nubia from sources to the south in the African interior. Egypt's iron resources were located south of the fifth cataract in Nubia [Bunson 2002: 129]: It is not yet known when iron working began in Nubia but Meroe later became a major centre not only for production but also for dispersal of techniques [Edwards 2004: 173-174]

Jethro and the Midianites remained in Yemen while Moses led the Hebrew on a forty year march that culminated after his death in the conquest of Canaan. Jethro's Arabic name means "little tribe" implying the faithful remnant of the departed Hebrew [Torrey 1967: 71]. Exactly what Jethro's accomplishments were remain unknown, but he was prestigious enough to have the highest mountain in Arabia called after him and be revered by Islam, respected by Judaism and is probably associated with monotheism in Yemen [Torrey 1967: 55]. The Prophet Muhammad persistently considered invoking the name of Rahman (from Yemen) instead of Allah but was persuaded otherwise [Torrey 1967: 55]. Some researchers believe that Moses adopted Yahweism from Jethro [Mondriaan 2011]

Arabian Israel and Judah

Aforementioned, several late 19th and early 20th century academics drew attention to a probable long established ancient Jewish presence in Arabia. Some, like Dozy, speculated that the Promised Land was there, not in Palestine. Recent research, particularly by Thomas L. Thompson, has resulted in major universities disowning traditional Old Testament archaeological scholarship but a number of factors linked to religion, politics, status, race, media control, and class have bedevilled attempts to reassess the evidence. Kamal Salibi's *The Bible came from Arabia* (1985) revived interest Arabian Judaism and was a reasonable, well researched, attempt to offer a solution to the maximalist-minimalist controversy. It offended Israelis and antagonised the Saudis, who saw it as an excuse to extend Israel into West Arabia. Groups that saw their own beliefs vindicated by Salibi's hypothesis, namely, the Beta Israel, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Yemeni Jews, remnant African Judaic groups and Rastafarians, have been unable through political pressure, economic and career sanctions, media bigotry and lack of resources, effectively to voice their support. Although the Nubian Moses-Ethiopian/Eritrean Exodus - Arabian Solomon hypothesis has significant, albeit globally scattered, support, main stream publishers and the Western media have ensured that there is a growing class and racial divide regarding conflicting opinions. European and Arab commentators and academics, most with deep but narrow academic backgrounds such as archaeology with no knowledge of Ge'ez and Sabaean, generally disdain African evidence concerning the Old Testament. Phillipson [2012:] who has relegated the Hebraic-Israelite traditions of the Beta Israel to non-Christian pre-Islamic Arabian monotheism, totally ignores the main part of the inscriptions at Adi Kaweh and evidently did not read Hubbard's thesis

carefully. Jan Retsö [2003] does not mention the issue of a probable ancient Arabian Judaism in his work *The Arabs in Antiquity*, let alone works by Salibi, Rabin and Torrey. Early Ethiopian traditions and documents have been scrutinised overwhelmingly for centuries by foreign researchers and commentators who unreservedly accepted the Old Testament free from cynical self-serving manipulation. Sympathetic early commentators such as James Bruce [1730-1794] were disparaged but it clear from the work of academics such as David Hubbard, Jacqueline Pirenne, James Pritchard, Chaim Rabin and Edward Ullendorff that there were seeds of doubt. That said, the main issue is that the Salibi and supporting hypotheses are *revolutionary* and, if accepted, would lead to a colossal, unprecedented revision of world history. This may explain why there has been no palpable shift in attitude concerning the true location of the events of the Old Testament. The “exaggerated” interpretation is preferred to an African-Arabian hypothesis. Inevitably, further research and significant acceptance of this hypothesis will take among independent scholars place outside “prestigious” universities, most probably in African and African Diaspora circles.

The main evidence for supporting Salibi’s hypothesis of an Arabian Judah is:

- i) Rabin’s *Ancient West Arabian* [1951], which shows that Hebrew had an influence of the dialects in the area named by Salibi as the location of the Old Testament
- ii) The antiquity of the Ethiopian name for the Ark of the Covenant [Leeman 2011]
- iii) The geography of the Sheba-Menelik Cycle [Leeman 1994, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2015, 2005a]
- iv) The antiquity of the Torah in the Kebra Nagast, indicating a source in ancient Arabia [Hubbard 1956; Leeman 2015a]
- v) Traditions concerning the Queen of Sheba
- vi) Beta Israel traditions
- vii) The inscriptions at Adi Kaweh [Schneider 1973; Leeman 2009b]
- viii) Assyrian and Egyptian withdrawal from West Arabia coinciding with the zenith of the Israelite united kingdoms under David and Solomon.
- ix) The evident long established and deep influence of probable local early Judaism on Arab culture
- x) The pattern of Judaic settlement in Arabia with little in the north and the majority in the south
- xi) Practices and traditions of the Ethiopian/Eritrean Orthodox Church
- xii) The Kebra Nagast’s explanation concerning the disappearance of the high priesthood of Judah during Solomon’s time.

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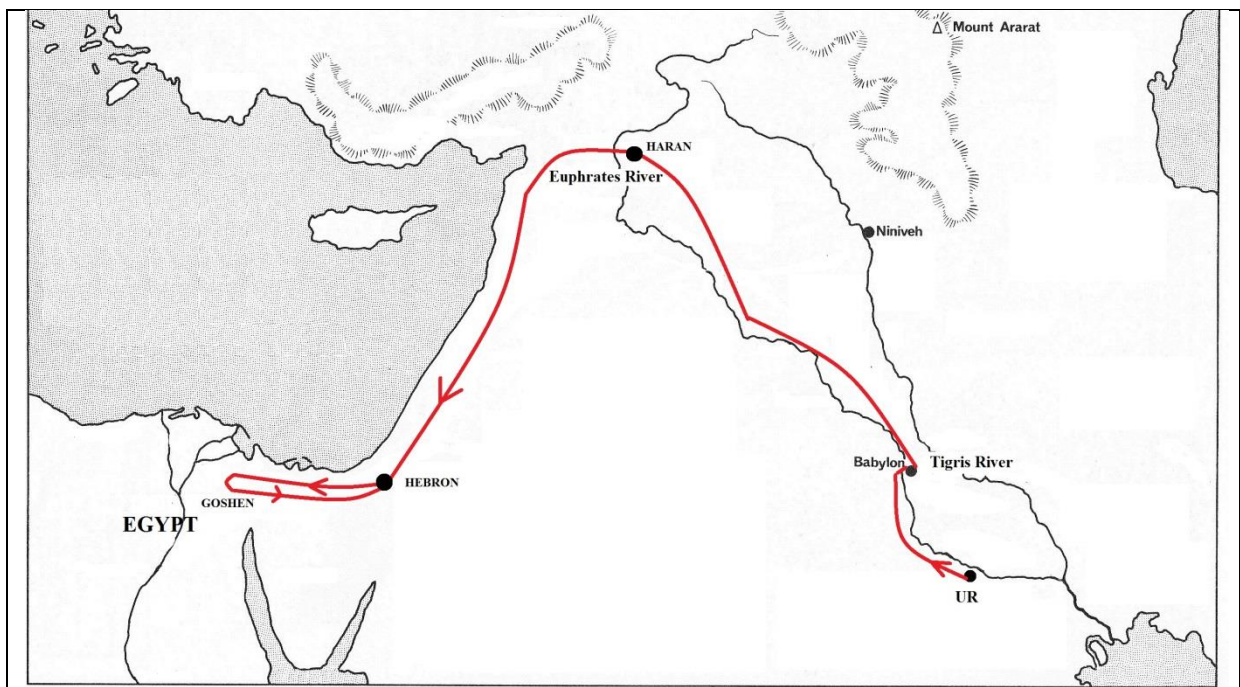
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MAPS ILLUSTRATING THE NUBIAN MOSES, ETHIOPIAN EXODUS AND ARABIAN SOLOMON HYPOTHESIS

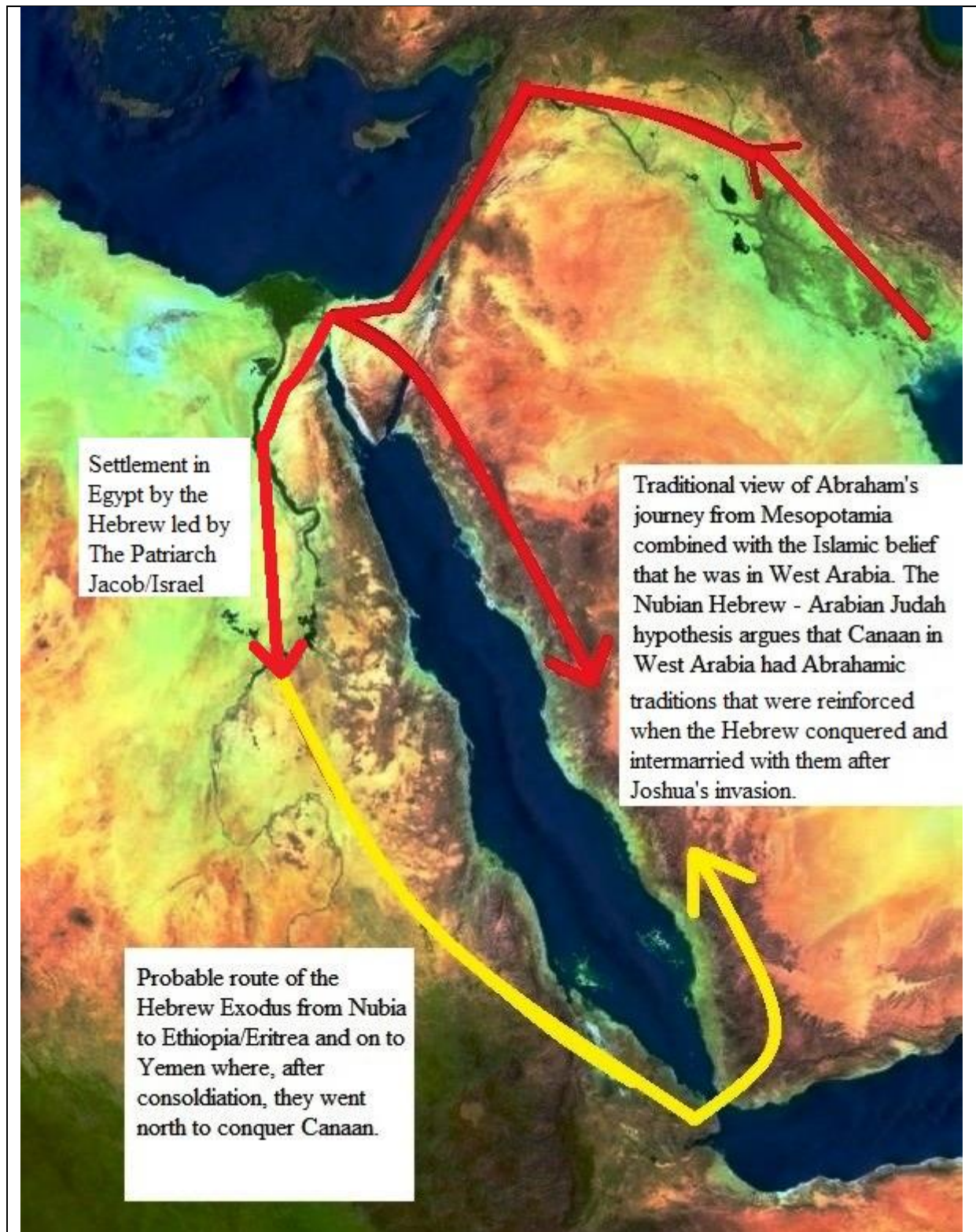
Map One: Abraham's journey



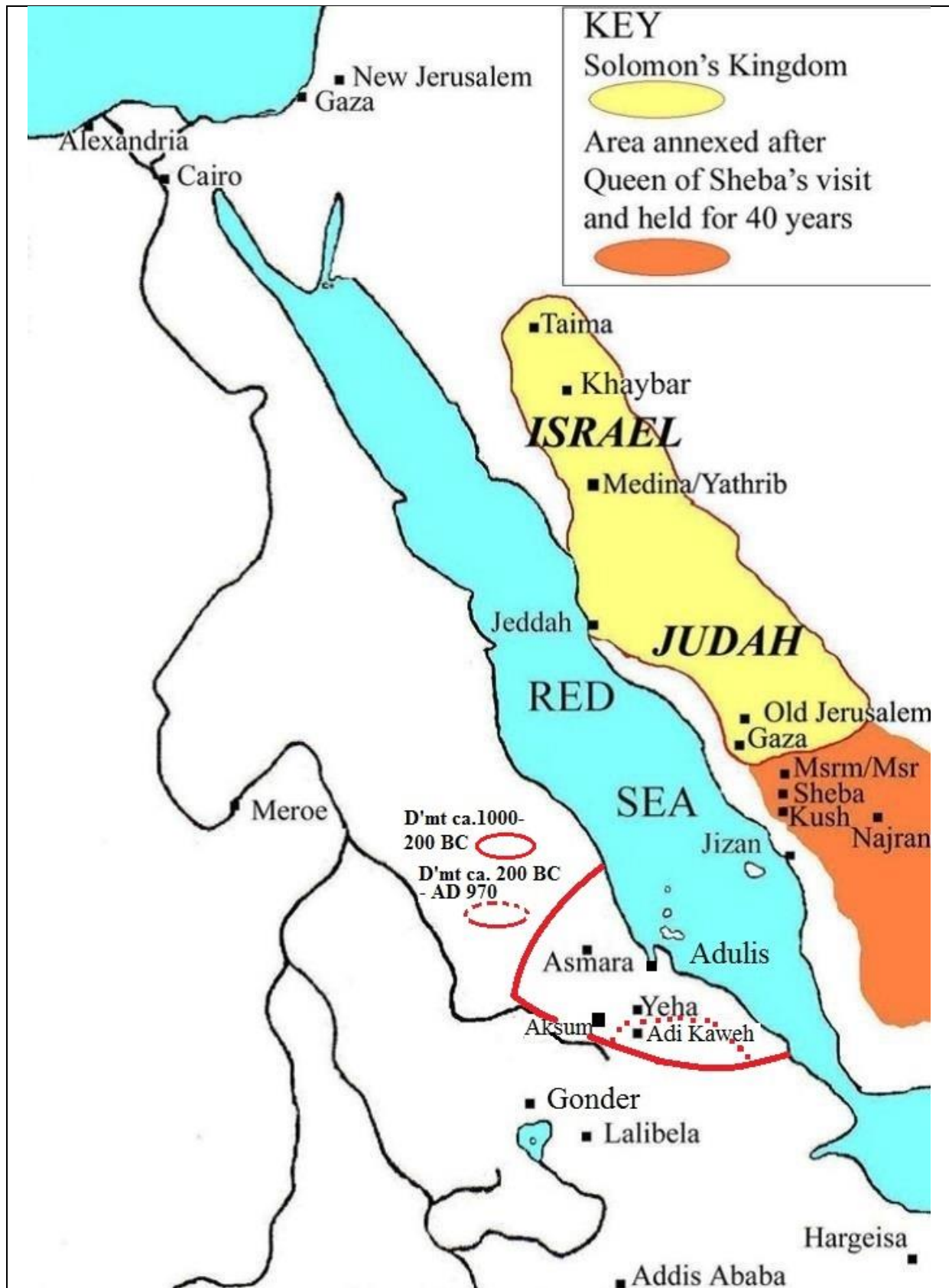
Map Two: Division after Abraham?



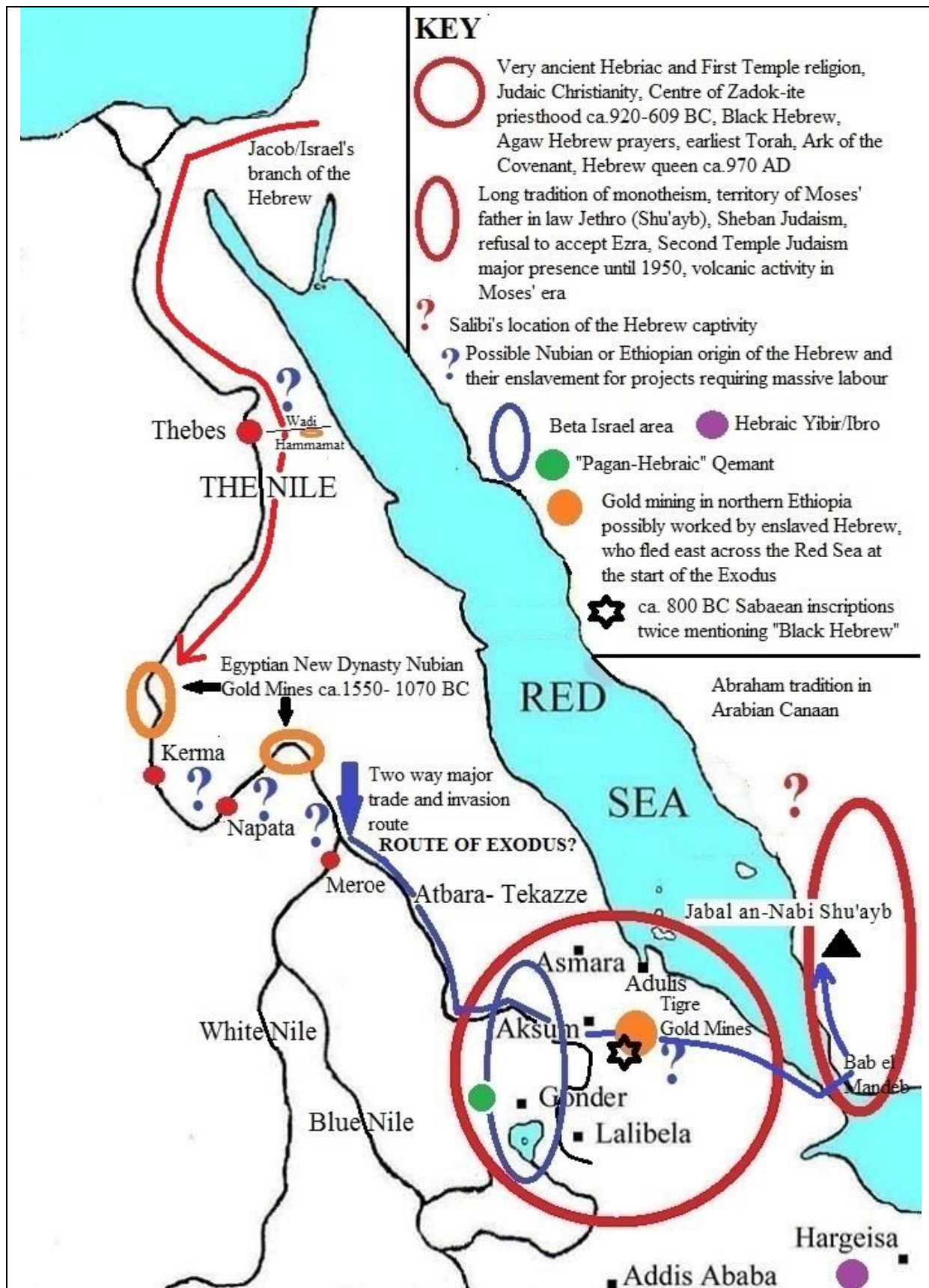
Map Three: Probable Route of Abraham, followed by the Exodus



Map Four: Realms of D'mt, Sheba, Israel and Judah



Map Five: Summary



ADI KAWEH, WUKRO, ETHIOPIA
QUEEN YODIT OF D'MT'S CAPITAL AND TOMB?



Adi Kaweh village (from the excavated Sabaean Temple site to its east). There is a second Adi Kaweh village slightly to the north of the original village.



The two incense burners at Adi Kaweh with the word “Hebrew” outlined in red